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AN
ANSWER
TO
Several LETTERS

Written by
SCOTISH GENTLEMEN
In His Majesties Dominions beyond the Seas,
To the MASTER & GOVERNORS
OF THE
Scotish Corporation

AND
HOSPITAL in LONDON.

*Giving a true Account of the Erection of the said
Company, and its Progress from the Year 1664,
to 1677. for the Satisfaction of such as desire
• that Information.*

GENTLEMEN,



WE cannot but judge well of your Intentions, by the desire you testify in your Letters, to be informed of the Grounds and Motives that induced us to procure the Erection of a Corporation of our Countreymen in London: And as we rejoyce to perceive you acted by the same Charitable and Publick Spirit that moved us, so we think it our Duty to satisfy your just Demands as clearly and succinctly as possibly we can. Though we need not put you in mind that many use-
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ful and great Works have had their Rise from low and fortuitous Beginnings; your own, and the experience of the World, being sufficiently furnished with many Instances of this Nature; yet that you may the more fully understand the Original and Progress of our Society, by the accidental Motives and real Causes of its Establishment: take the pains, Gentlemen, to be informed,

That in the Year 1664, a worthy Member of this Society, who is still alive, being visited with a long Fit of Sickneſs, and in doubt of Life, reſolved to communicate to the Poor of his Countrey (whom he found to be numerous, and under great ſtreights) part of the Fruits of thoſe his Labors, which the Lord had been pleaſed to bleſs with Succeſs. But his Charity having a farther Proſpect than a preſent Supply to the Indigent at that time, and being willing to mortifie a Gift, that might be a ſtanding Stock for the Relief of the Poor not only of the preſent but future Ages; and to ſecure the ſame to Poſterity, as far as worldly Contingencies could permit, and beyond the uncertainties of private Truſtees, whoſe malverſation or decay, often diſappoint the pious Intentions of Donors; he took thereupon the advice of Council.

Their Answer and Reſolution was, that his preſent Charity might be ſafely enough diſtributed, but, that if his intention was to ſettle a perpetual Stock, the uſe and improvement whereof might be a ſtanding Supply for the Poor of his Countrey, the ſureſt Expedient for that was to obtain Letters Patent from His Maſteſty, for the erecting of an Incorporation of *Scots* in *London* which having the Priviledges of a permanent and authorized Society, would be by Law impowred to act and oblige themſelves and Succeſſors, in ſuch a manner as no private Conſociation could pretend to. This Reſolution was immediately imparted by the Sick Perſon to the moſt ſober and diſcreet Men of our Countrey, who then had the direction of that voluntary Contribution, which by the name of Box-money was collected for the uſe of the Poor. They maturely weighed the matter firſt privately among themſelves, and then in a general Meeting of our Countreymen, who all foreſeeing the advantages of the Deſign, and applauding the Council, notwithſtanding their doubts of procuring the Patent, beſtirred themſelves ſo zealouſly in that Affair, that having made application to the Earl of *Lauderdale*, and made appear to him the profitableneſs of that Project, they obtained of His Gracious Maſteſty, by the interceſſion of the Earl, after a Reference and ſatisfactory Report made to His Maſteſty on that Subject, a Patent in ample Form; which took place the Third of *September* 1665. and Mr. *James Kinnier* was choſen firſt Maſter.

So good a Work was almoſt ſtified in the Birth; for the Contagious Plague which then diſpeopled *London*, and thoſe fatal Flames (which the Year following by the deplorable ruine of the City purified it from Infection to the very foundation;) if not wholly cruſhed, yet ſuſpended for ſome time the execution of our good Intentions. Theſe
dismal

disfmal Times, however, put not a stop to the main Wheel of Charity, for during the Sicknefs Year, when our Beginnings were but small, there were Three hundred *Scots*, and of *Scotish* Extraction, who dyed of the Plague in and about *London*, buried at the Charge of the Company, with as much decency as the Calamity of the Time would permit; and many who were Infected maintained, and taken care of, until they recovered, and by God's blessing the Contagion ceased, without putting the feveral Parishes where they had lived to one Farthing of Expences.

Whil'ft the City lay buried under its own Rubbifh, though many of our Members who had been fcattered by thefe two heavy Vifitations, were again returned, and as earneft in their defires as formerly to promote that Work of Charity; yet the lownefs of our Stock, which was hardly fufficient to fupply the Neceffities of the Poor that then lay upon us, made us almoft defpair of bringing our defigns to any accomplifhment. We wanted a Hall for our Meetings, Ground to build upon, and Money to purchafe and effectuate both. Neverthelefs in the Year 1670, the City having to admiration recovered, or rather out-done much of its ancient fplendor, we refolved with revived hopes vigorously to fet upon the performance of our long intended refolutions. To that effect having feveral times afsembled the Body of our Company, to confult about the meafures we were to take, we at length had notice given us of a piece of wafte Ground in *Black-Fryers*, where formerly had flood a large dwelling Houfe belonging to a Lady: having after a view found the Ground for our purpofe, we made application to the Lady for the Purchafe. She was unwilling to fell the Ground right of her Inheritance, but being informed of the Pious and Charitable ufe that it was defigned for, ſhe frankly granted us a Leaſe of it for a Thouſand Years. Having laid this foundation, we again in feveral Meetings of the Corporation confidered of the wayes of raifing Money to go on with our Buildings; and found ſo great readinefs not only in the Members of our own Society, but alſo in feveral perſons of worth and quality of our Nation, who liberally and bountifully both gave and lent us Money, upon no other Security but the Bond of the Corporation, that we were enabled in feveral Gradations to build, firſt four dwelling Houſes fronting the Street in *Black-Fryers* that leads to the River, with an Inſcription on the Frontifpiece, declaring them to be for the uſe of the Poor of our Countrey, which were finiſhed in the Year 1671, next our Hall, and a Houſe contiguous to it, the Hall having its Entry from the Street in *Black-Fryers*, and lying open to *Bridewell* Ditch, with an Emblem of Charity cut in Free Stone, and faſtened in the Wall, finiſhed in the Year 1672. And laſtly another Houſe which ſtands upon a parcel of diſputed Ground that lay long undetermined, with a Kitchen and two Rooms over it for a Dwelling-houſe for our Beadle, which at the ſole Charge of the Members of the Company were finiſhed in the Years 1675, and 76. The Charge of the whole Building, viz. Seven Dwelling-houſes, the Hall with two ſmall Rooms adjoining to it, the Kitchen and two Rooms over it for the Beadle, by a true Computation, amounting to Four thouſand four hun-

hundred, and about fifty Pounds *English*, no inconsiderable Sum to have been raised and disbursed in so short a time. And though the Corporation hath by such a vast Expence contracted Debts; yet when we consider the chearful and free Contributions of those who have already concurred with so much Unanimity in that charitable Work, and the former experiences that we have had of the Goodness and Blessing of Almighty God, in raising us up many times unexpected Supports to our languishing Hopes; we cannot but confidently believe, that the like means may hereafter free us from Incumbrances, as have hitherto advanced the Work in such a progress to perfection: And the rather, that none of those bountiful Benefactors who have even above their Abilities contributed to the Work, have any reason from the success of their honest Endeavors, to think their worldly Estates any way lessened thereby; God Almighty, who charges as a Debt on Providence what is chearfully given to the Poor, having many times imperceptible wayes to repay what that way is lent to himself: And that moreover all such whose hands have been open in their Charity, besides the inward satisfaction of Conscience, the inseparable Companion of Virtue, and the hopes of future Bliss, the promised Reward of Well-doing, have also their Names and Benevolences recorded to Posterity in a large Sheet of Parchment hung up in the Hall, for their present satisfaction, and an encouragement to others hereafter to imitate their laudable Example.

God Almighty having thus far prospered our Endeavors, we thought it convenient to have our Patent, which in some things was defective, and not rightly conceived, altered and enlarged. Accordingly having addressed our selves to his Grace the Duke of *Lauderdale*, the Kings Most Excellent Majesty, at the earnest desire of the Duke, has been Graciously pleased, to renew our Patent in such full and ample form as was requisite: And the Lord Chancellor of *England*, and other Officers of State through whose hands it past, have with a Generous and Charitable Liberality been pleased to discharge us of their usual Fees; to whose Noble Munificence we do acknowledge our selves Eternally obliged. Nor must we profess less Gratitude to the Magistrates and Governors of this famous City of *London*, who have not been wanting to encourage us by many Favors, and to many other Charitable Persons of the *English* Nation, who professing themselves much taken with so laudable a work of Charity, have freely and bountifully assisted us with their Benevolence, which we hope will not be frustrated of Reward.

Hitherto, Gentlemen, we have acquainted you with the Motives that gave Being to our Corporation, and with its Beginnings and Progress to this present: We shall now briefly give you an Account of its Constitution and Government, with some few Instances, amongst many others, of the Benefits and Advantages that may therefrom redound to the Poor of our Countrey.

The Corporation consists then, of a Master, Eight Governors, Three
and

nd thirty Assistants, with some subservient Officers appointed by them, a Register, Treasurer, Stewards and Beadle, and of entered Members. The Master is yearly chosen out of the Assistants by the eight Governors, who are perpetual, and must be all *Scotish* men born. If the Master dye before his Year be expired, the eldest Master is to supply his place until a new Election: And upon death, or exclusion for misdemeanor, of any of the Governors, the eldest Master amongst the Assistants, provided he be a *Scotish* man born, is to succeed in the Office; but if otherwise, he is only after he hath been Master, to continue Assistant, and the next *Scotish* man successively of the Assistants that hath been Master, is to be admitted, according to the true and genuine sense and meaning of our Patent. Out of the Assistants, by the Master, Governors and Assistants, there is likewise yearly chosen a Treasurer, who in course falls to be Master: and who, to prevent all fraud and adulteration, by suffering the Money to be in several hands, is alone to receive the Companies Rents, which are collected by two Stewards altered and of new elected every Quarter-day; and at the Years end is to give in his Accompts at a Publick Meeting, which being audited and set the Balance, is to be delivered to the succeeding Treasurer for the following Year: so that the increase or diminution of the Publick Stock, is punctually and publickly known every Year.

It is to be observed that in all Meetings concerning the Affairs of the Corporation, whatsoever is spent is not charged upon the Publick Stock, but every one freely and without grudging pays his proportion, though most have already considerably contributed to the Foundation.

Now as to the Advantages which the Poor may receive by this Corporation so constituted, they are many; for Lands may be either purchased in the Name of the Corporation, or made over to them in trust, to be managed and improved for the use of the Poor, with far more security than can be expected from any private Trustees who are not elected in a lawful permanent Body. Legacies and Donations, of what nature soever, tending to the benefit of the Poor, may likewise be made over to the Company; whereby the Necessitous of our Countrey who are here decayed and aged, may, by way of Pension, be supplied, such as fall Sick relieved and taken care of, such as dye, decently buried, and such as want Money to go to their Native Countrey, furnished; (Instances of all which we daily meet with in abundance:) without Burden to the Parishes where they live, Charges to Strangers amongst whom they have been, and Disparagement to the Countrey to which they belong; and this we think a Consideration to be valued by all the ingenuous Lovers of their Countrey. We are likewise by our Patent enabled to be serviceable to our Countreymen beyond sea, in performing the Wills of the Dead as Executors, and distributing their Legacies amongst their Friends as they shall appoint, or in dispensing the Charity of the Living, in the manner that themselves shall prescribe, without fraud or prevarication, the nature of our Constitution made up of so many Persons whose private Interests are so

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various,

various, and their publick so uniform, in no probability being like admit of any. Many other Benefits you your selves may gather from the Priviledges of such an Incorporated Body, which we shall not present, to your farther trouble enumerate.

To conclude, Gentlemen, we are fully persuaded that your own candid Reflections upon what we have above intimated to you, will not only incline you to approve our charitable performances in this kind, but also encourage you to assist us with your Counsels, and benevolent Concurrence in a Work of so much advantage to the Indigent of our Countrey; it being not only a Christian duty, but in some manner so the Interest of all Men, especially such as are abroad, to exercise their Charity in this way; for whosoever shall but consult his own experience as to the ebbings and flowings of Temporal Goods, and the many Revolutions of Providence, though Prosperity, at present, may seem with a smile to invite his Soul to take its rest, shall have reason without a blush or shame, to think it not altogether impossible, but that (if not) himself, yet some of his Relations who are dear to him, may at some time or other be obliged to that wherewith at present his Charity is pleased to oblige others. Though this be a Truth which the uncertainty of worldly Enjoyments does too often confirm, yet as it is our Duty to wish well to all Men in General, so particularly we pray God that he would be pleased more and more so to prosper you in this World, that you may have occasion to be fully satisfied with your Portion, and abundantly to supply the Necessities of others; and grant you in the next the lot of the Righteous, and the reward of Well-doers: This is the hearty and earnest wish of,

G E N T L E M E N,

Your affectionate Brethren and Countreymen,

JOHN RENNEY present M

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